

# Workplace Behaviour Policy Full School incl. EYFS

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2025 / 2026



## Ibstock Place

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CO-EDUCATIONAL DAY SCHOOL

# **IBSTOCK PLACE SCHOOL**

## **Workplace Behaviour Policy**

### **Full School including EYFS**

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#### **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff (including EYFS) at Ibstock Place School (hereinafter 'Ibstock' or 'the School').

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has a statutory responsibility to ensure that this policy is ratified and compliant, as set out in the Independent School Standards 2019 (ISS). The Governing Body delegates this responsibility to the Head, who is accountable for the operationalisation of this policy. In turn, THE Director of Safeguarding is delegated responsibility for the consistent application and implementation of this statutory policy across the School. Staff must follow the expectations set out in this policy.

#### **Introduction**

1. At Ibstock Place School we aim for all members of our school community to feel valued and respected as equals. To this end we strive to ensure that all staff feel that they are part of a 'joyful and nurturing culture' and a 'community that is rooted in kindness'. Whilst we hold these as key pillars for the school and values that we should all be upholding; we also recognise that there are times when interactions between staff may fall short of these principles. This policy outlines the expectations we have for staff in maintaining a harmonious workplace and how we understand and deal with workplace behaviours that do not meet these expectations, such as bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation.
2. The policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the following legislation and statutory guidance:
  - Equality Act 2010
  - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
  - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
  - The Teachers Standards (June 2013)
  - The Worker Protection Act 2023

3. This policy contains the following sections:

- A – Legal Framework
- B – Workplace behaviour definitions
- C – Our expectations for a positive workplace environment
- D – Maintaining a Positive Workplace
- E – Workplace Behaviour Procedure
- F – What happens if you are accused of inappropriate workplace behaviours

4. The aims of this policy are:

- To provide an overview of the legal duties placed on Schools as a workplace to protect staff
- To provide definitions of the types of workplace behaviour that are not acceptable between colleagues at Ibstock Place School; namely bullying, harassment and sexual harassment and victimisation.
- To provide an overview of the positive working environment that staff should expect whilst working at Ibstock Place School
- To provide guidance as to how staff should notify the School should they wish to raise concerns about these workplace behaviours.
- To raise awareness of the School's responsibility to investigate and act should we become aware of these types of workplace behaviours between colleagues.
- To outline the process that the School will use to investigate and act on any cases of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation.
- To provide staff with guidance and advice on how to manage informal and formal allegations

5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies or procedures:

- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Policy,
- Grievance procedure, Disciplinary procedure in Staff Handbook
- Staff Mental Health Policy

6. The policy applies to every individual working for the Ibstock Place School irrespective of their status, level or grade. It, therefore, includes the Headteacher, Deputy Heads, Heads of Department, members of the Senior Leadership Group, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, volunteers, home-workers, part-time or fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff.

7. We recognise that there are a variety of spaces and situations where work colleagues interact and so for the purpose of this policy the school will investigate workplace behaviours in the following spheres:
- Any work situation on the school site
  - Other work situation such as at a social event with colleagues, work trips, school visits etc.
  - Situations between colleagues that emerge from staff use of our School IT systems or social media platforms.
  - Any other work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role or maintain positive relationships with other staff
8. This policy does not form part of individuals' terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have contractual effect. It does, however, reflect our current practices and all staff are required to adhere to the principles in this policy in their interactions with others.

## A – Legislative Framework

9. As a workplace we are committed to meeting our legal duties in regard to inappropriate workplace behaviours. To this end, we have systems and processes in place to ensure that we satisfy the following legal duties:
- Our duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to provide our Staff with a safe place and system of work
  - Our duty under The Equality Act 2010 to prohibits harassment related to sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, disability or age
  - Our duty under The Equality Act 2010 to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment of workers in the course of their employment
  - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it unlawful for an individual to pursue a course of conduct which they know or ought to know would be harassment, which includes causing someone alarm or distress
10. We also recognise that in some cases, individual members of Staff may be legally liable for harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation of colleagues or third parties and if taken to court or an employment tribunal may be ordered to pay compensation. In some cases, it can also amount to a criminal offence. In such situations, the School will support with the enquires of the Police or external bodies undertaking legal proceedings.

## B – Workplace behaviour definitions

### Bullying

11. *Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined and threatened. Power in this definition does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.*
12. Workplace bullying may involve or include:
  - Physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. It could happen face-to-face, online, by phone or in writing
  - Being shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others, picking on them or setting them up to fail
  - Physical or psychological threats
  - Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision
  - Inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance
  - Abuse/misuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority
  - Deliberately excluding someone from meetings or communications without good reason
  - Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
  - Copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know.
  - Unfair treatment
  - Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
  - Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
  - Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
  - "Upward bullying" e.g. someone at the same or a more junior level showing continued disrespect, refusing to complete tasks, spreading rumours, constantly undermining someone's authority, or doing things to make the person seem unskilled or unable to do their job properly
13. In determining whether behaviour is bullying, we are cognisant of the following considerations:
  - Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another.

- Banter between colleagues can be tolerated or normalised in some collegial relationships but its perception as neutral may change over time and meet the definition of bullying.
- Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment, but there are 'grey' areas that can be disputed and can be more problematic.
- Bullying does not include legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour.
- Bullying does not include reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment.
- It could involve a pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident.
- It is not always obvious to others.

## Harassment

14. When bullying or unwanted behaviour is about certain protected characteristics under discrimination law, then we refer to it as 'harassment'. The protected characteristics which apply are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin);
- religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct and its link to protected characteristic has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.*

15. Harassment may involve or include the following:

- Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space, and more serious forms of physical or sexual assault
- Continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome
- Sending or displaying material that some people may find offensive or insensitive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile telephone, posted on social media or posted on the internet)
- Offensive or intimidating comments, language or gestures, including shouting or behaving in an intimidating manner or insensitive jokes or pranks or banter; mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability

- Racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender
- Outing or threatening to out someone as gay or lesbian, or ignoring or shunning someone; for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation or a workplace activity
- Aggravating a person even if they were not the intended “target”; for example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if they create an offensive environment for them
- Treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past; for example, it will be harassment for a manager whose repeated advances to a more junior employee have been consistently rebuffed subsequently to give that employee a poor performance review because they rejected the manager’s advances
- Perception of another person; for example, that the victim is gay, or is disabled, whether or not this perception is correct and even if the perpetrator knows that their perception is, in fact, wrong; and
- Perception of someone because they are associated with another person; for example, harassment of someone because they care for a disabled person, or because they are friends with a transsexual person, or a white worker who sees a black colleague being subjected to racially abusive language which also causes an offensive environment for them.

16. In determining whether behaviour is harassment, we are mindful of the following considerations:

- A single incident can amount to harassment.
- The unwanted nature of the conduct distinguishes harassment from friendly behaviour that is welcome and mutual.
- Harassment can occur whether or not it is intended to be offensive, as it is the effect on the victim, which is important, not whether or not the perpetrator intended to harass them.
- Even if you did not intend to harass someone, if your behaviour has this effect on someone else, then you may be found to have harassed them. They may only be a bystander to behaviour you directed at someone else, but they may still have been harassed.
- Behaviour can still be harassment even if the person being harassed does not complain or ask for it to stop.

## Sexual harassment

17. Sexual Harassment is also recognised in discrimination law as something separate to sex (i.e. female or male) harassment. *Sexual harassment is when someone is subjected to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or when a person is treated less*

*favourably because they have accepted or rejected unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.*

18. Sexual harassment may involve or include:

- Unwanted conduct from someone of the same or a different sex
- Sexual comments or jokes
- Suggestive looks, staring or leering
- Propositions and sexual advances
- Making promises in return for sexual favours
- Sexual gestures
- Intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- Sexual posts or contact on social media or online
- Spreading sexual rumours about a person
- Sending sexually explicit emails or text message
- Unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing
- Suggestive behaviour or suggestions that sexual favours may further a career or that a refusal may hinder it
- Sending or displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photos (including by way of e-mail, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile telephone or posted on the internet)

19. In determining whether behaviour is sexual harassment, we recognise that:

- The conduct need not be sexually motivated; it only needs to be sexual in nature.
- Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment (because it is not unwanted) but situations can change and sexual conduct that has been consensual in the past may become unwanted.

## Victimisation

17. *Victimisation is treating someone less favourably than others because they have in good faith, complained (whether formally or informally) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or another member of Staff, or have supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence or information in relation to a complaint.*



18. This could include:

- Failing to consider someone for promotion because they have previously made a complaint of harassment
- Dismissing someone because they accompanied a colleague to a meeting about a harassment complaint
- Excluding someone from work meetings or increasing their workload because they made a complaint or gave evidence as a witness for another employee as part of an employment tribunal claim about harassment

## C - Our expectations for a positive workplace environment

20. We want all staff to have a positive experience of working at Ibstock Place School, to be safe to undertake their duties and to experience a strong sense of community that comes from teamwork, equality, kindness and having a clear understanding of their own and other's roles.

21. We have clear and universal standards for workplace conduct and so we expect staff to:

- Treat people with respect and dignity in all communications that they have with colleagues, whether face-to-face, over the phone or in writing
- Exercise restraint with their words and actions so that others do not take offence
- Refrain from using offensive language or gestures of any nature in the workplace and this is whether directed at a particular person or not
- Refrain from sharing or viewing inappropriate images or other offensive content at work
- Think before making a joke in the workplace and consider whether anyone may be upset or offended by what they have said
- Be mindful of personal space and show respect for this by never invading a colleagues' personal space or touching them without permission
- Respect colleagues' personal items and effects and avoid touching or using these without permission
- Be inclusive of all colleagues and do not exclude colleagues unfairly from discussions or events
- Be aware that heightened emotion in our voices and the tone of voice we use can negatively impact on others and so staff should not use an aggressive tone or aggressive language when speaking with colleagues or in earshot of others
- Not be physically aggressive towards colleagues
- Not make sexually suggestive comments

- Not mock, mimic or belittle colleagues in relation to any protected characteristic or otherwise
- Not gossip about colleagues
- Be wary of banter as this can be problematic with colleagues and its reception can change over time

## D - Maintaining a Positive Workplace

22. We are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment and this means that we have a zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and Victimisation. The following outlines the principles and practice that we have in place to ensure that we meet our obligations to maintain a positive workplace:

- All staff are required to read this policy and attend regular training (at least every 3 years) on what constitutes bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- Senior Management Team (SMT) and Heads of Faculty are trained to recognise bullying or harassment and are required to address any inappropriate behaviour.
- New employees to the School are required to complete this training as part of their induction.
- We are also committed to preventing harassment by third parties, such as suppliers, contractors, and visitors.
- We communicate to third parties our zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation and will investigate all reports, taking appropriate actions including warnings, banning third parties from entering the school site and or reporting criminal acts to the police.
- Staff who experience inappropriate workplace behaviours are encouraged to raise this with the school informally in the first instance or formally as part of our grievance procedures.
- Regardless of whether an allegation is raised informally or formally, allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation will be taken seriously
- The School will actively seek to understand the context, nature and impact of allegations of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation and initiate professional conduct conversations and/or investigations as is appropriate for any situation of which we become aware.
- We aim to undertake professional conduct discussions and investigations in a timely manner to reduce the impact on staff.
- We aim to investigate and address instances of inappropriate workplace behaviour in a confidential manner wherever possible.

- We aim to provide protection for complainants and witnesses and will ensure that no one making a genuine complaint, or assisting in an investigation, will suffer intimidation or victimisation as a result.
- We view retaliation against complainants or witnesses as a serious disciplinary offence, and this too may constitute gross misconduct.
- We aim to be a reflective workplace that actively supports and develops our staff so that situations of inappropriate workplace behaviour and their impact do not continue.
- We may offer counselling support and restorative mediation processes for individuals
- Should an investigation highlight problematic systemic workplace behaviour practices we will put in place whole school training.
- Staff are encouraged to raise concerns or suggest improvements to harassment prevention measures with the Head of HR.
- Following formal grievance procedures, proven inappropriate workplace behaviours will be treated as misconduct under our Disciplinary Procedures and, in serious cases, may amount to gross misconduct leading to dismissal without notice.
- This policy will be reviewed annually. We may amend this policy at any time or adapt our approach where appropriate as trends emerge or if there is new guidance available
- We assess and regularly review the risk of harassment in the workplace.

## E – Workplace Behaviour Procedures

23. Due to the seriousness with which we view harassment, bullying and victimisation, informal and formal reporting procedures are set out below.

### *Informal Procedure*

24. If you believe you are being bullied, harassed or victimised, you could initially consider raising the problem informally with the person responsible, if you feel able to do so and consider it appropriate. You should explain clearly to your colleague that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. You should make it clear to them that you want the behaviour to stop. If this is too difficult or embarrassing to do on your own, you should speak to your line manager, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.
25. If you are in any doubt as to whether an incident or series of incidents may amount to bullying, harassment or victimisation within the scope of this policy, then in the first

instance you should approach your line manager confidentially, on an informal basis, for advice. They will listen to you and help you resolve the issue informally in a way you are comfortable with or be able to advise you as to whether the complaint necessitates further action.

26. If informal steps have not been successful or are not possible or appropriate, or you wish to escalate the matter to a more formal procedure (which can be done at any time), you should follow the formal procedure set out below.

#### *Formal Procedure*

27. If you wish to make a formal complaint about bullying, harassment or victimisation, you should submit it in writing to the Headmaster, whose role is to achieve a solution wherever possible and to respect the confidentiality of all concerned. If the matter concerns that person, you should refer it to the Chair of Governors.

Your written complaint should set out full details of the conduct in question. These details should include:

- The name of the harasser or bully
  - The nature of the harassment, bullying or victimisation
  - The date(s) and time(s) when the harassment, bullying or victimisation occurred.
  - The names of any witnesses; and
  - Any action taken so far to attempt to stop the harassment, bullying or victimisation
28. As a general principle, the decision whether to progress a complaint rest with the staff member. However, we have a duty to protect all our Staff and may be obliged to pursue a complaint independently if, in all the circumstances, it is considered appropriate to do so.
29. Consideration will be given to whether the alleged harasser or bully should be redeployed temporarily or suspended on full pay or whether reporting lines or other managerial arrangements need reasonably to be adjusted pending an investigation into your written grounds of complaint and the outcome of the grievance hearing.
30. Further information is set out in [our Grievance Policy and Procedure](#).

## E – What happens if you are accused of inappropriate workplace behaviours

31. We appreciate that allegations of inappropriate workplace behaviour are difficult for staff to negotiate and can cause heightened levels of tension and a feeling of being scrutinised. The following is guidance to support staff in managing informal conversations about behaviours and advice on how staff can best manage themselves if a formal investigation takes place.

### *Advice and guidance*

- If someone approaches you informally about your behaviour, do not dismiss the complaint out of hand because you consider that they were only joking or because you think the complainant is being too sensitive.
- Staff should remember that different people find different things acceptable, and perceptions can differ significantly from individual to individual. It is possible that you may have offended someone without intending to do so. If this is the case, the person concerned may be content with an explanation, an apology from you and an assurance that you will be careful in the future not to behave in a way that you know might cause offence. Provided that you do not repeat the behaviour, which causes offence, this may well be the end of the matter.
- Where a colleague has attempted to address the matter with you informally, appropriately and in good faith, any failure on your part to respond in kind or to take proactive steps to prevent future occurrences may be considered should disciplinary proceedings subsequently be instigated against you.
- Taking the time to listen and communicate constructively with colleagues at an early stage may prevent matters from escalating to the level where formal grievance and disciplinary procedure may need to be instigated. It is therefore in both party's clear interests to seek to resolve the matter amicably, cooperatively and constructively.
- If a formal complaint is made about you, this will be fully investigated, and it may bring disciplinary proceedings if appropriate. Complaints of bullying, harassment or victimisation will often be allegations of gross misconduct, which if proved could lead to summary dismissal (termination of your employment with us without notice). If that is the case, you may be suspended on full pay during the investigation and (if a disciplinary hearing is to be called) until disciplinary proceedings have been concluded.
- Members of Staff should refer to our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for further information.
- Trust that the school will treat complaints of bullying and harassment sensitively and will endeavour to maintain confidentiality as far as reasonably practicable whilst discharging its duties under this policy.

- As above, allegations which prove to be made in bad faith or maliciously will also be treated as potential disciplinary offences in themselves under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Disciplinary outcomes will usually be kept confidential. However, in exceptional cases, the outcome of the hearing may be disclosed to the complainant, a third party and/or agency where we believe there is a lawful basis to do so, such as to safeguard any individuals at risk or if there is a substantial public interest to do so.

#### *A note about confidentiality*

32. Confidentiality is an important part of the procedures provided under this policy. Every member of Staff involved in the operation of the policy, whether making a complaint or involved in any investigation, is responsible for observing the high level of confidentiality that is required. Confidentiality will be maintained during any investigation process as far as is possible to protect those involved.
33. Breach of confidentiality will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence and may give rise to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
34. We may place information and documents about a complaint raised by or about you on your personnel file. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

#### *Other support*

35. If you require further advice or support, you can contact:
  - Our Employee Assistance Programme (BUPA), a confidential 24-hour telephone counselling service, which can be accessed on 0800 269 616.
  - Your trade union where you are member
  - the Equality Advisory and Support Service available [HERE](#);
  - Rights of Women in England and Wales, available [HERE](#).

## **Queries**

Queries on this policy should be directed to the Director of Safeguarding.

## **Review and Verification**

This policy is reviewed annually by the Director of Safeguarding.